THE CASE OF THE REMARKABLE HUSBAND

By Clarence Budington Kelland

In Which an Amateur Detective Matches His Wits Against the Wiles of a Crafty Oriental—In Unraveling One Mystery He Encounters Another

I NOTCED the parcel-post delivery come to a stop before the house of my neighbor, John Sandys, and watched with some interest an oblong, paper-wrapped box carried to his door. The box might have contained flowers, but the habits and character of Mr. Sandys made flowers incredible. He was the type of man who might send his wife a present of a sirloin steak upon her birthday or of a waffle iron at Christmas, but for him to have sent a box of flowers casually upon no occasion whatever was unimaginable.

Alpin Stone, my adjoining neighbor—a dealer in second-hand books—and, so I have discovered, an individual well worth cultivating—was trimming the grass about a flower bed. I called to him.

"Alpin," said I, "a parcel has just been delivered to the Sandyses. It looks like flowers."

"Then," said he, "Mrs. Sandys must have an indiscreet admirer."

"It might," said I, "contain food."

"If it came from Sandys," said he, "it might contain anything that is devoid of beauty or sentiment, and is useful."

"But," said I, "he's not such a bad chap. Seems fond of his wife, and she of him."

"A good husband and bountiful provider," said Alpin sententiously, "but as empty of imagination as a puff ball is of honey."

At that moment Mrs. Sandys appeared in the door. Even at the distance of a hundred yards one was aware of her exceptional prettiness, even though her features were indistinguishable.

She stood in the door an instant, looking up and down the street; then spying Alpin and myself, ran across the porch, down the steps and toward us. She paused before my house breathless.

"Will you come? Will you please come—quick?" she said.

"What has happened?" said I, though Alpin already had moved toward her.

"The box. I'm afraid of the box!" Then, as we walked beside her—and her pallor and trembling made it apparent she was the victim of no ordinary fright—she said, "I don't know what it is. I never felt so before. It isn't fright exactly, but a kind of loathing. The moment I touched that box it overcame me. I felt that I had something horrible in my hands."

"You opened it?" Alpin asked.

"No——No!"

Alpin paused. "You say your sensation was one of loathing and horror?

"Yes."

"Was the box light or heavy?"

"It was—it was quite heavy."

"Did it feel," asked Alpin, "alive or dead?"

"It felt," she said after a pause, "malignant."

"There was no mechanical ticking?"

"No."

Alpin nodded to himself. In Mrs. Sandy's hall he paused and said impatiently, almost petulantly, "The box! The box!"

"There." She pointed to a table in the library where rested a container some two feet long by ten inches wide and six inches deep. It was wrapped in stout manila paper and secured intricately by a strong cord, knotted and knotted again.

We approached it. No sooner had we come within its immediate neighborhood than Mrs. Sandys covered her face with her hands and uttered a sort of moan. I myself was conscious of a peculiar and highly disagreeable sensation, not unlike the feeling one has in a rapidly descending elevator. Alpin Stone's face mirrored some unpleasant emotion, but his lips were compressed and his brows drawn. As if by a tremendous effort of the will, he compelled himself to lay his hand on the cover of the box. He lifted it, weighed it, shook it. From the sound the box contained some heavy substance, packed loosely in paper. He set the box down—and the movement within continued.

Alpin turned to look at me, and nodded, as if confirming some conjecture already made.

"Wait," he said, "Don't touch it until I come back. On your life, don't untie a knot. Or better, I will carry the box into the garden. Come along."

* * * *

WE walked through the house to the back yard, a little plot secluded by high shrubs, and Alpin placed the box on the lawn; then he walked to a young fruit tree and ruthlessly cut a strong limb with his jack-knife—a limb with forking branches. This he trimmed meticulously until he held in his hand a stout wand, some six feet long, with a crotch at its extremity.

"Mrs. Sandys, stand at a distance, please. You, Jenkins, take that hoe and be ready."

The cord was unfastened. Alpin stood back, and with his wand loosened the wrapping paper, disclosing a strong box of corrugated board. He placed the tip of his wand under the cover and flipped it upward, poising tensely.

The box was filled loosely with white paper such as is used to pack fragile objects, paper cut into narrow strips and looking like white excelsior. That was all. Alpin reached forward with his wand and stirred the mass of paper!

Slowly something emerged. Something dark, sleek, loathsome reared itself from its concealment with a lithe, graceful, horrible, undulating movement, slowly swaying to and fro. I think I uttered a cry. Alpin lunged forward deftly with his wand. The box was overturned amid a disconcerting flopping and thrashing about, and then Alpin turned to me, calm restored, and said in his natural voice, "Have a look."

I ventured nearer. There, pinned to the ground, with the arms of Alpin's fork imprisoning its throat, if the thing can be said to have a throat, was a reptile which I recognized as the hooded cobra of the Dekkan Peninsula!

"Imagine," said Alpin, almost with pleasure, "a man, unsuspicious, opening that box and fumbling blindly in the loose paper to see what he had."

I could imagine it, and the thought nauseated me.

"Better take Mrs. Sandys over to your wife," he said. "Then hurry back and help with the execution."

I left Mrs. Sandys, who seemed struggling with hysteria, in the hands of my wife, a woman of stable disposition and much tact; after which I returned to Alpin Stone, and together we completed the unpleasant task of disposing of the snake.

"Did you observe Mrs. Sandys closely?" he asked. "Was it your opinion she acted as one would expect a woman to act in the presence of a wholly unexpected and frightful occurrence? Or was it your opinion she showed fright without such astonishment as you would expect to find?"

I considered. "She was exceedingly upset," I said.

"Naturally," he replied shortly, "but was she astounded that anyone should try to take her life by such an abhorrent means?"

"I cannot say," said I.

"Nor can I," he said, more to himself than to me. "It is of first importance. If the whole affair is incomprehensible to her, we have one species of puzzle. If she had reason to expect a murderous attack of some kind, but was only surprised and terrified at the manner of it, we have quite a different problem. What do you know of these people?"

"Hush," I said, for I saw, out of the corner of my eye, the figure of a man come around the house and pause at sight of us. I turned. It was Mr. Sandys. Mr. John Sandys was a short gentleman with wide shoulders and thick waist. His neck was unusually short, and his wide face habitually wore an expression which, to give it the best of it, was placid.

"Good afternoon," said Alpin.

"Howdy do?" he responded.

"A frightful thing has happened," said I.

"Is that so?" he responded in exactly the tone he would have used if I had mentioned my belief that it would rain.

"An attempt," said Alpin, "has been made to murder your wife."

"Who did it?" said Mr. Sandys.

"Some one," said Alpin, "sent your wife a poisonous snake by mail."

"What kind of a snake?" asked Mr. Sandys. Then, after a moment's apparent study of the situation. "Didn't bite her, did it?"

"No."

He hesitated, as if striving to cope with the situation. "Must have kind of frightened her, I guess," he said. "Mr. Sandys," Alpin said sternly, "do you know of any reason why your wife might fear a murderous attack?"

"Susan?" He pondered it briefly. "Why—no."

"Have you or Mrs. Sandys an enemy?"

"I s'pose," he said, "there's folks that don't like us. Everybody can't like everybody. But that ain't a reason to send snakes."

"Hardly," said Alpin dryly.

"You will notify the police at once?" said I.

"What for?" he responded with the minutest trace of irritation. "There ain't any harm done."

"Because," said I angrily, "the individual who made this attempt will try again. He must be discovered before that can happen."

"It is a matter," said Alpin in an odd tone, "for Mr. Sandys to decide." With which he turned his back squarely and walked out of the yard. Mr. Sandys, apparently, paid no attention to our going. As we crossed the street we met Mrs. Sandys returning; she walked hurriedly and passed us without token of recognition.

"Jenkins," said Alpin Stone, when we reached my piazza and dropped itno chairs. "John Sandys is either a very good man or a very bad man. In either event he is a remarkable man."

"He impresses me as being a cl—" said I.

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AT that moment the newsboy threw a folded paper upon the steps. I opened it to glance at the day's news. The first item my eyes encountered was a so-called feature story in the middle of the page under the cartoon. I imagine the occurence of the word "snake" in the headline arrested my attention. I read it hastily and passed it to Alpin.

The item, written in jocular vein, described with much detail how some one unknown had broken into the snake-house at the zoo, admitting himself by cutting the pane from the window with a diamond. There were surmises as to the purpose and alcoholic condition of the burglar; but the telling point of the narration was the fact that a certain snake, a cobra recently arrived from India, was missing.

"Perhaps," said Alpin, "we should not have killed the reptile. Doubtless it was a valuable specimen."

He was silent a moment, looking apprehensively from time to time toward his own house. His especial worry when engaged upon some criminal problem was lest his wife should discover his activity. Mrs. Alpin Stone regarded her husband's penchant for criminal investigation as a low habit, savoring of large feet and broad shoes and taking of snuff, which she learned was a habit common among policemen.

"We may group premeditated murders," he said, "into three general classes. Those arising from greed (perhaps a majority), those arising from some of the numerous by-products of so-called love, and those arising from the desire for vengeance. It has long been my conclusion that crimes of a fantastic nature have their origin in the last."

"Then—" said I.

"I incline to believe this was an attempted crime of venegance."

"But what," said I, "could a pretty, commonplace little home body like Mrs. Sandys have done to call down such a horrible revenge?"

"Jenkins," he said solemnly, "there is no such thing as a commonplace home body. The mere fact of her sex invests every woman with tremendous potentialities."

"Sandys' attitude," said I. "It is incomprehensible. Doesn't he realize? It piles the responsibility upon us, does it not? If he refuses to take action for his wife's protection, we must."

"And shall," said he. "I was about to go to the shop to consult my indexes. This is an exceptionally fascinating set of circumstances, bizarre, exotic. It should be a matter of small labor to find the right road. But to follow it—that may prove both difficult and—hazardous."

Alpin, as you may perhaps not know, is an omnivorous reader. He buys many books for his second-hand shop, but is distressed if a purchaser carries one away. And he had, for a quarter of a century, made a study of the crimes of fiction and of fact, studiously classifying them as to their characteristics, and cross-indexing them, so that, given a set of facts, he can, with a reasonable degree of certainty, build up from his data the true conclusion.

It was next morning before I saw him again.

"Have you noted," he said, "the remarkable increase in the number of vanished young women for the past six months?"

"No," said I.

"It is remarkable," he said. "And the notable feature is the class of young women who vanish. In New York it is girls who shop in expensive 5th avenue shops, in San Francisco it is girls who live on the Hill, in Cleveland it is young women whose photographs appear in the society columns. There have been no less than seven such disappearances in six months."

"Which indicates?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Anything you choose," he said, "but, undoubtedly, something! None of them has been found."

"But that has no bearing on the Sandys affair."

"I wish," he said, apparently ignoring my remark, "I knew from what part of the world Sandys came. If I knew it were Australia, matters would be simplified."

"Ask him," said I, and his only reply was an ironical smile.

He gazed off across the street a few moments, and I fancied his brain busily engaged with the affair in hand, but what was my astonishment to hear him say, with every sign of a keen interest in the subject, "I wonder how one recognizes real poetry. The borderland between the sublime and balderdash is so narrow. Drivel and loftiness run along side by side."

"I never read poetry," said I, with some displeasure.

"You should. Not so much for the poetry itself, perhaps, but for the pleasure of determining if the sentiment comes from the heart of the writer, or if he were only stringing together, with a certain degree of skill, words which seem to mean something, but are utter rot."

"Meantime," said I, "Mrs. Sandys sits in danger of her life."

"I am not unmindful of Mrs. Sandys," he said with that irritating placidity which sometimes settles upon him, "but I chanced to think of this Hindu poet who has conquered our drawing rooms and our publishers and our lecture audiences."

"What about him?" said I.

"Either," said Alpin, "his is the mind of a very sweet and deep and extraordinarily wise man, or it is the cunning of a charlatan. I have read him. Sometimes I fancy I catch glimpses of thought so profound and comforting as to be beyond the grasp of the ordinary intellect. At other times I am certain it is nothing but pseudo-esoteric rot, meaningless with intent."

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HE arose and walked across the street to the Sandys home, mounted the porch and rang the bell. Mr. Sandys appeared and stood in the door, staring at us in his mild, vague, uninterested way.

"When do you go?" Alpin said abruptly.

"Go?" said Sandys with an air of not comprehending.

"Move on," said Alpin, "to the next stopping place. This one, of course, has become impossible."

Mrs. Sandys appeared, her eyes flashing, her cheeks flushed to extraordinary prettiness by sudden danger. "Don't annoy him. Don't question him. I won't have it. Isn't it enough——"

"Quite enough," said Alpin. "I do not wish to annoy. My purpose in coming was to ask for your promise not to—disappear—for forty-eight hours. You can do so with safety, I think. I am almost willing to guarantee it."

"Forty-eight hours," said Sandys unemotionally. "Why should I move on in forty-eight hours?"

"Mrs. Sandys," said Alpin, "you have been making inquiries about me. Do they warrant you in begging your husband to place some confidence in me?"

"John. Please."

He did not look at her; scarcely did he look at us. He merely seemed to stand there like some immovable piece of household ware, not endowed with consciousness.

"Mr. Sandys," said Alpin, "are you Canadian?"

"No."

Alpin nodded. "Nor English—I mean a former resident of the island?"

"No."

"I have always wanted," said Alpin, "to make the voyage to Australia."

Sandys waggled his head uneasily. "It must be a—long trip. I—personally I don't like long trips."

"Did you notice in the paper of this morning," said Alpin, "that Marylin Graine, one of the season's most photographed debutantes, has disappeared?"

peared?"

"No," said Sandys.

"Who is the richest man in the world?" asked Alpin.

"Why," replied Sandys after a pause, "I suppose Mr. Rockefeller."

"Wrong. It is the Maharaja of Sawnpore. Good evening. I have your promise. Do not leave this house for forty-eight hours. Admit no one but yourself. Take in no parcels except from my hands. Preferably keep to the second floor and away from all windows. Good evening."

"Well!" said I in exasperation, when we reached my own porch again, "that was a peculiar conversation."

"Most illuminating," said Alpin. "I was sure I must be correct. The manifestations are identical." He leaned forward and touched my knee. "Come. I have secured an invitation to call upon the great Hindu poet—the Beggar of Benares."

"But I have no interest in poets."

"All the same, I imagine this one will interest you. He seems to have a great message and to be a striking personality."

"Very well, if it will please you," said I, with the air of one making a sacrifice.

"Have you," said he, "such a thing as a firearm?"

"To visit a poet?"

He smiled. "Do you remember the multiplication table?" he asked.

"Naturally."

"Bear in mind," said he. "If I touch your arm, fix your mind upon it. Recite it to yourself as if your life depended upon it. Which it may. Concentrate upon it to the exclusion of everything else. Carry your pistol

ALPIN LUNGED FORWARD DEFTLY WITH HIS WAND.

in the inside breast pocket of your coat—on the left side."

* * * *

THE taxicab stopped before the door of a brick house set well back from the street in a profusion of trees and shrubbery. I was taken somewhat aback, for the house was upon our most elite thoroughfare, and was of no mean pretensions.

"Poetry," said I, "must be profitable merchandise in India."

"I believe," said Alpin, "that the Beggar has a patron who foots the bills, thus acquiring merit."

We traversed the long walk and presented our cards to a bearded, sandaled Hindu who performed the offices of butler. The house, I noted at once, was redolent with some pleasing, if exotic, odor, as of priceless incense burning. There was a profound quiet. The Hindu did not speak. He bowed low and motioned us with courtly gesture to follow. After crossing several rooms we entered a spacious apartment given over to the preservation of books. Cases filled with thousands of volumes erected themselves to the ceiling, and there were no windows. The light of day was admitted through the glassed apex of the ceiling, but it was now evening, and the sole illumination came from tall candles rearing themselves from oriental candelabra. There was a faint haze of smoke—the smoke which disseminated the odor noticeable upon entering the house.

"Welcome, Friend of the Written Word," said a voice, rich, melodious, beautiful, "and welcome to your companion."

It was then that my eyes first rested upon the face of the Beggar of Benares, and whatever apprehensions of evil I entertained vanished as if before some magic of exquisite purity. It was the face of an old man who has lived beautifully; a face which spoke at once of childlike simplicity and of profound wisdom.

The Beggar sat, oriental fashion, upon a low divan. His robe was white, but not so white as his beard. At his feet crouched a second Asiatic, given to stoutness, with head bowed upon knees and face hidden as if in perpetual reverence.

"We have come," said Alpin Stone, "to drink at the fountain of your wisdom."

"The wisdom," said the Beggar gently, "of a child lost in the wilderness."

I felt a great shame, a shame for the presence of a firearm in my possession. It seemed a sacrilege.

"Be seated," said the Beggar. "It is well to comfort the body." He spoke a word to the servitor at his feet, who arose and placed chairs for our convenience.

Never from the lips of man have I heard such gracious eloquence! The talk was of virtue and beauty, and of the triumph of spirit over flesh. One listened as to a revelation. I was at peace; I was made to feel that the world was good and to perceive the feebleness of evil.

"And now," said Alpin, "let us speak of men. We of the west rest under a cloud of ignorance and misconception as to you of the east. Names come to us on the wind of rumor, but they remain names. To some we must be grateful—to the patron who sent you to us, the Maharaja of Sawnpore. Tell us of him."

The servitor at the feet of the Beggar lifted his head for an instant, and I felt the sharpness of his piercing glance.

"A youth, bound to the flesh, but striving toward the heights of purity," said the Beggar. "But I thirst. Let such refreshments as are fitting be brought."

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THE servitor clapped his hands; portieres opened, and a slender girl, swathed to the face in white, entered bearing a tray. She moved slowly, and, if the phrase be permissible, with mechanical grace, and stood waiting. The eyes of the servitor did not lower themselves, but remained fixed on Alpin Stone.

"Enlighten us, master," said Alpin, and some subtle change in his voice caused me to sit tense and apprehensive, "is not evil worked under the shelter of virtue of blacker face than evil which stands fearless in the open?"

I looked to the Beggar. His head rested upon his breast; his eyes were closed, and his face was one of perfect peace.

"The master sleeps," said the servitor.

"It is well," said Alpin. "He will neither see nor hear."

"It is well," replied the servitor.

"Rutton Lal," said Alpin.

"I am Rutton Lal."

"At first I was deceived. His goodness deceived me."

"It was well conceived," said the fat servitor, rising. He laughed with an amusement which was inexplicably repulsive to me. "See," he said. "You came to gain knowledge. Look."

With sudden gesture he threw back the folds which concealed the face of the girl bearing refreshments. It was a white face, a western face. "Marylin Graine," said I for her features had been made familiar in the public prints since her disappearance.

Rutton Lal spared me a glance. "You know what you know," said he, and laughed again. "Now the work of your lives is accomplished."

Suddenly Alpin clutched my arm. "The table," said he, and, remembering, I began to recite those labors of my schooldays. "One times one is one, one times two is two, one times three is three. . . ." But even as I counted I saw things which were not. The Beggar of Benares vanished from his seat, and in his place sat a woman of gracious beauty, at whose face coiled a snake, and as I watched, reciting mechanically, fighting to perceive the real from the unreal, the snake uncoiled and moved toward me. Alpin stood beside me, staring, wide of eye, wavering upon his feet. I tried to cry out, but no sound came. I knew, but I do not know how I knew, that the approach of that serpent meant the approach of death, but I was powerless to move. "Six times six is thirty-six; six times seven is forty-two; six times eight——" I could not recall it. I struggled to remember the answer.

Rutton Lal came very close to Alpin Stone and laughed in his face.

"We who do the bidding of the Maharaja of Sawnpore do it well," he jeered, and suddenly stopped jeering, for Alpin no longer wavered on his feet with drowsy face and half-shut eyes; Alpin's left hand clutched the fat olive throat, and there was the sound of a blow as the butt of Alpin's automatic fell upon the lank hair of Rutton Lal's rounded skull. The man sank to the ground.

"Jenkins," said Alpin.

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I CLENCHED my hands, rubbed my eyes. The beautiful woman gave place to the sleeping Beggar; the crawling snake vanished. I felt weak, nauseated.

"He almost had me," said Alpin. He bent quickly and handcuffed the wrists of Rutton Lal. "Tie his feet," said he. "Here is rope. We're not out of the house yet—nor Marylin Graine."

The girl still stood, motionless, apparently sightless, unmoved by what had passed.

"Rutton," said Alpin, "at the first appearance of something that doesn't exist I shall shoot."

The Hindu shrugged his shoulders.

"You escaped from prison in Australia."

"Evidently."

"Why did you send the snake to Mrs. Sandys?"

Rutton Lal maintained a stubborn silence.

"Do you want him to know?" Alpin pointed to the still sleeping Beggar.

"No. No. He must not know."

"I thought so. Sublime goodness can impress even such as you. Talk, and I promise he shall not know. How is Mrs. Sandys concerned in this?"

"She was one of us."

"In Australia?"

"Yes."

"Where your business was abducting girls for your master, the Maharaja of Sawnpore?"

"Yes," very sullenly.

"She was the Mary Noyes who gave you up to the police? Why?"

"Love," said Rutton Lal with a sneer. "She loved a man."

"A good man?"

"A good man."

"Who knew her story, and her wickedness—her abandoned childhood and the current of events which threw her into your hands?"

"Yes."

"And he persuaded her to cleanse her soul? He took his life in his hands that she might be redeemed?"

"He was a brave man," said Rutton Lal.

"Sandys?"

"Yes"

"You have hunted them down."

"For two years I have searched."

"You chose a strange means."

"A warning. The story would go far. Many would read it. Those who read would fear to do as this woman did."

Alpin nodded. "So I reasoned," said he. "And now, under the shelter of the virtue of the Beggar of Benares you have entered again the business of abduction?"

"But he does not know. He does not know."

"Is there an honest man in this household?"

"All save four. It was necessary."

"Rutton Lal," said Alpin, "you will disappear. Now, while I wait, you will send your message to the intelligence of the Beggar that you have been called away, and who will take the trust of his affairs. He must not suffer."

Rutton shrugged fatalistically. He shut his eyes and remained silent a moment. "It is done," he said. "When he awakens he will know."

"I do not wish to frighten the girl. Tell her to awaken tomorrow in her own home—without memories."

"It is done," said Rutton presently.

"Come," said Alpin. He bent over and freed Rutton's feet. "There is a very modern telephone, Jenkins. Will you be so good as to notify the police, and call a taxicab to take Miss Graine to her home?" He turned to Rutton Lal. "Perhaps," he said, "you need refreshment. Will you choose a glass from the tray?"

"For the first time since birth," said Rutton, "I acknowledge intelligence in an occidental. You play well to the last move." He lifted a glass to his lips, and then sat down, composing his limbs comfortably, and buried his face in his arms as he had sat when first we entered the room.

"We waited. Half an hour passed in silence. Rutton Lal sat motionless; the girl stood as if carved from stone. The turbaned butler entered, paused uncertainly.

Alpin arose. "Cover Rutton Lal," he said. "There may be trickery. I doubt it, but he may hope this is not checkmate but only mate."

He motioned the butler to follow him, and they disappeared. Almost instantly he returned with our old friends Detectives Samuels and Rousch at his heels.

"Gentlemen," said he, with a note of complaisance in his voice. "Miss Marylin Graine. Yonder is Rutton Lal, abductor extraordinary to his highness the Maharaja of Sawnpore. The story will wait. Let us make haste."

Ed. Rousch stepped heavily to Rutton Lal's side and placed a professional hand on his shoulder. The man did not move. Roush lifted the oriental head; the eyes were closed; it was the face of one who has gone peacefully to sleep—but it was the sleep from which there is no awakening.

Late that night we rapped at the Sands door.

"It is I," said Alpin and we were admitted.

"There is no need to move on," he said. "Rutton Lal is dead."

"You know——" For the first time Sandys exhibited strong emotion.

"The story in all its details. But you need have no fear. Malicious tongues will never touch Mrs. Sandys. Now you may begin to live."

"But how?" I said. "How did you arrive at all this?"

"The index," he said. "The cobra was a favorite means of Rutton Lal. He used it twice in Australia, once in Shanghai, and nobody knows how many times in other places. It, taken with the disappearance of a number of young society women, pointed to a recurrence of two years ago. The cable told me Rutton was at large. But I admit I was shaken when I faced the Beggar of Benares. It seemed impossible evil could shelter itself under such simple virtue. Then I saw Rutton's eyes."

He turned to Mrs. Sandys. "Madam," said he, "may I congratulate you upon a husband such as few women possess?"

"I am trying," she said with grateful tears, "to be worthy of him."

(Copyright, 1924.)

"THE MASTER SLEEPS," SAID THE SERVITOR.

Sweets Other Than Sugar.

SOME years ago a report ran through the public press that a plant had been discovered in South America that produced a substance 180 times sweeter than sugar. The report startled the sugar growers all over the world, nor were they reassured until it was found that the substance was a glycerin, and not a true sugar. Efforts to get seeds of the plant failed at that time, but not long ago several ounces of the dried leaves and a small amount of seed were received by the Department of Agriculture. Experiments with the leaves show that they are as sweet as saccharin.

Investigation of certain stores of crystallized honey in places in Pennsylvania where the bees had died from starvation led to the discovery of a quantity of rare sugar, known as melezitose, which was extracted and purified and placed at the disposal of the bureau of chemistry. It appears that melezitose is one of the rarest of sugars. Minute quantities of it have been available to men of science for many years, but the supply has never been sufficient to permit of extensive experimentation.